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Revitalizing public administration

Strengthening public administration for the Millennium Development Goals: a partnership-building approach

Report of the Secretariat

Summary

The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/225 on public administration and development, emphasized the centrality of partnership between the public sector and public institutions, both political and executive, and the private sector and civil society as a vehicle in support of the development process. Since then, the call for enhanced partnerships has been reinvigorated and strengthened at all major international forums, including at the Millennium Summit and in the Millennium Declaration (2000). In the most recent triennial policy review of operational activities in 2002, the General Assembly went a step further by adopting a recommendation that the United Nations development system should assist national Governments in creating an enabling environment in which the links and partnerships in the development process would be strengthened. The key underpinning of partnerships for the United Nations system are shared values, goals and responsibilities, as enshrined in the Charter and reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration and its aftermath. Both the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey in 2002, and the World Summit for Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, amplified the Millennium Declaration and reaffirmed that partnerships, at both the country as well as at the international level, are key to pursuing the Millennium Development Goals. At the international

* E/C.16/2004/1.

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level, concerted efforts are under way to secure partnerships to increase both the quality as well as the quantity of official development assistance (ODA), while at the national level a different type of partnership, with both the private sector and civil society organizations, is needed in order to achieve the Goals, especially the important goals of faster economic growth and poverty reduction. In many countries where a variety of partnerships have been forged, especially with the private sector, the results have been mixed. Among other things, lack of suitable negotiation skills and inadequate market conditions have rendered some of these partnerships less productive and, therefore, less conducive to growth. In spite of this, it is the latter that is being put forward as the main raison d'être for private/public partnership. The partnerships with non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society and public administration/citizens dialoguing for pro-poor policies are on the increase, although the value of this new methodology has yet to be fully appreciated either by Governments or the political leadership, especially the latter. On the side of the public administration, the values, attitudes and skills for carrying on dialogue with citizens, and in the case of the private sector, the skills in negotiation, need to be changed and improved; on the side of the citizens' groups, similar changes are also warranted.

Partnerships with civil society organizations and citizens' groups are crucial for local-level realization of the Millennium Development Goals as well as implementation of other dominant poverty reduction strategies, including the poverty reduction strategy papers of the World Bank. These partnerships need to be further strengthened by a greater measure of accountability and transparency, which will help regain public confidence and support for governmental policies and commitments. The United Nations system is committed to supporting national Governments in empowering public administration to play a vital role in accountable partnerships and to partnering for the Millennium Development Goals and the subsequent international commitments.

I. Context

1. General Assembly resolution 50/225 on public administration and development emphasized the centrality of partnership of the public sector with the private sector and civil society as vehicle for growth and pro-poor development.[1] Since then, the call for enhanced partnerships has been reinvigorated and strengthened at all major international forums, including at the Millennium Summit in 2000. In the most recent triennial policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system in 2002, the General Assembly went a step further with its strong recommendation that the United Nations development system should assist national Governments in creating an enabling environment, in which partnerships as a form of socio-economic governance that link the national Governments, the United Nations development system, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector are emphasized.[2]

2. The call for partnerships by the United Nations system and its development partners remained a major agenda item at all international conferences and global summits of the 1990s, including those on education, gender, the environment, children, social development and human settlements, which culminated in the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000 and the promotion of the Millennium Development Goals. General Assembly resolution 55/2, which contains the Millennium Declaration adopted by 147 heads of State and 189 Member States, is by far the most significant partnership sought by the Organization over discrete, numerical and time-bound development objectives.

3. The description, analysis and recommendations presented in this paper are a continuation of an earlier dialogue initiated by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, and continued at its second meeting in New York, held from 7 to 11 April 2003. In its report entitled "Mainstreaming poverty reduction strategies within the Millennium Development Goals: the role of public administration" (E/C.16/2003/5), the Committee made the case that without strong and effective institutional structures and conducive partnerships, the likelihood of successfully achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially target 1 of Goal 1 — the reduction of extreme poverty by half by 2015 — was regarded as low.[3] It was argued that weak and inadequately partnered institutions, by definition, could not be relied upon to develop strategies and policies conducive to the achievement of the Goals. To the contrary, and by implication, weak or non-partnered institutions, both public as well as political, were likely to be a major obstacle to driving, monitoring, partnering and implementing the strategies and policies vital to the achievement of the Goals. Capacity deficits and non-partnered institutions are also barriers to transparency and accountability, making these institutions less effective in delivering quality services at the grass-roots level. Furthermore, partnerships also have the capacity to enhance the knowledge base, an important but often a less prioritized capital for policy development.

4. Two levels of partnerships, at both the national and at the international levels, are vital for supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. At the national level, partnerships are needed for the mobilization of the governmental and non-governmental resources vital to ensuring sustained economic growth and poverty reduction. Partnerships at the national level are equally important for informed decision-making for pro-poor policies and strategies and ensuring transparency and accountability in public expenditure. Furthermore, partnerships

that produce improved accountability and transparency in public expenditure limit wastage, promote savings and thus, by implication, have the capacity to enlarge the domestic resource base from within.

5. At the international level, partnerships for mobilization of resources and for the establishment of a fair trade regime (the latter to help the developing countries to earn and generate more resources from within) are a sine qua non for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The world leaders recognized these needs. Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals specifies global partnerships for development as an important support element of the other seven goals, and specifically of target 1 of Goal 1, the reduction of extreme poverty by half by 2015.

6. In 2002, total annual net official development assistance (ODA) to all developing countries was $57 billion. The additional annual requirements have been estimated at $50 billion.[4] This is assuming that developing countries adopt sound policies and maximize use of domestic resources. In terms of an increase in gross national income (GNI), it implies an augmentation of ODA from the current 0.23 per cent to about 0.44 per cent of GNI. Hence, although short of the 0.7 per cent of GNI that developed countries are committed to allocate to ODA, a doubling of ODA from current levels will be necessary for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

7. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly made it clear that ODA is not sufficient and that, therefore, domestic resources as well as partnerships with the private sector will remain the primary driving force for development. However, as far as the latter is concerned, while current experience suggests that many parties have benefited from partnerships with the private sector, especially in infrastructure development, there are also cases where such partnerships, sought within a governance environment (that is, weak accountability and transparency arrangements) and non-competitive market conditions, including weak negotiating skills on the side of the public administration, seemed to have led to unhelpful outcomes. In some cases, these partnerships were sought without due regard for a well-grounded poverty reduction strategy. There are instances where these partnerships generated neither sustained economic growth nor reduced poverty. In many cases, they led to the opposite result. Therefore, when setting up private/public partnerships, it is important first to answer some basic questions, such as with whom they should be established, for what purpose and in what way they will impact upon poverty. An institutional framework to deal with partnerships in an accountable and transparent manner and an enabling environment that is conducive to competitiveness should first be put in place to ensure that these partnerships become cost-effective and productive. In addition, it is important that economic growth sought through private/public partnerships is underpinned by a well-grounded poverty reduction strategy.

8. A recent survey has revealed that the South-East Asian countries that grew at an annual rate of 6 per cent during the 1990s were able to reduce poverty from 28 to 14 per cent during the same period, a reduction of 50 per cent. In contrast, the South Asian countries that grew at a slightly lesser growth rate (4 per cent per annum) during the same period reduced poverty at a much slower rate, 2 per cent per annum, indicating a much less dynamic capacity to reduce poverty in those countries. These

are important lessons that must be kept in mind while strategizing private sector-led growth. It is important, in seeking private/public partnerships, that economic growth strategies be pro-poor.

9. In addition to forging private/public partnerships for the mobilization of capital for investment and growth, other forms of partnership that are more citizen-based and that can ensure a more accountable and transparent use of resources seem to ensure greater resource mobilization from within. This particular partnership potential, which has the capacity to expand the resource base from within, has been given significantly less attention than it deserves.

10. Empowerment of stakeholders, which includes citizens' participation and transparency of the process of pursuing the Millennium Development Goals, is at the core of both pro-poor growth and the generation of domestic resources vital for supporting a growth strategy. These elements, which are citizen-based and inclusive, constitute the key components of what is commonly known as, "good governance".

11. One of the key elements of "good governance" is a decision-making framework that forges intra-governmental as well as governmental/non-governmental partnerships, or the formation of a "joined-up government". A "joined-up government" is a government that links up both within and beyond and both vertically and horizontally. In pursuing a "joined-up" strategy, many countries are now encouraging citizens' participation in such hitherto restricted domains as fiscal policy processes in order to help formulation of fiscal policies that are inclusive and, most importantly, pro-poor. Some countries are also encouraging citizens' participation in monitoring public service delivery, especially at the local government level through what has come to be known as the "citizens scorecard system".

12. In summary, while partnerships for resource mobilization at the international level should continue, and while the United Nations system must continue to play an important role in these initiatives, similar attention should also be given by national Governments to looking at options that can help securing and enlarging resources at the domestic level.

II. The template

A. Revisiting fundamentals

13. It has been suggested that the Millennium Declaration and the associated Millennium Development Goals marked a watershed in global partnership and a reaffirmation of the Charter of the United Nations as it responds to the concerns of the new century. The concerns, as encapsulated by the original eight Millennium Development Goals and 18 targets, have been embraced and reaffirmed at subsequent conferences and summits, including the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit for Sustainable Development. At the global level, the custodian of the Millennium Development Goal process is the United Nations Development Group. Members of the Group provide policy and programme support to some 150 countries, jointly mobilizing and deploying resources in excess of $5 billion. There are three main pillars of the Development Group that drive the strategy and advocate for the Millennium Development Goals:

- The Millennium Project, which analyses policy options and is charged with developing a plan on how to implement and achieve the Millennium Development Goals[5]
- The Millennium Campaign, which mobilizes political support for the Millennium Declaration
- The operational country level activities, coordinated across the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system by the United Nations Coordinator, which help to mobilize resources and support countries in implementing policies necessary for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

14. Both the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development amplified the goals set in the Millennium Declaration and reaffirmed that partnerships are key to pursuing their objectives in a globalizing world. Hence, though maintaining the original template of the Millennium Declaration, subsequent conferences and summits forged additional partnerships and a coalition of networks to leverage the value of their commitments and activities.[6]

15. The following are regarded as the key components of a poverty reduction strategy:

- Ensuring support for economic and social initiatives that have a core focus on poverty reduction
- Strengthening capabilities to provide basic social services
- Assisting capacity-building for poverty assessment, monitoring and planning
- Supporting the partnerships among Governments, civil society and the private sector for the mobilization of resources. For such partnerships to be productive, a good governance arrangement, where power is shared equitably and decisions are made in an accountable and transparent manner, is important

16. These strategies, both explicitly and implicitly, require partnerships, a proactive public administration and political leadership that can provide unstinting support to the commitments made in the Millennium Development Goals and can take initiatives to mainstream the Goals within national priorities and development programmes. Similar initiatives are also needed to put in place an institutional framework, a framework of partnership, that can drive the two key elements of Millennium Development Goals: sustained economic growth and poverty reduction. In this regard, the roles of the United Nations Coordinator and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) are key in ensuring the kind of partnership, based on universal values and trust, that is needed to build on the achievements to date and maintain momentum. The UNDAF process, which is a partnership at the country level, is predicated on the specific mandates and relative competencies of the participating agencies of the United Nations system. The country common assessment (CCA) is the analytical and thematic tool that provides the necessary inputs for the UNDAF process. Agencies and departments of the United Nations without field representation, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, are, in principle, represented in these initiatives by the office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator. However, owing to financial constraints, and by virtue of not being physically present, the UNDAF process, more often than not, is carried out by the representatives of the United Nations system in-country,

with only the occasional call for support from United Nations agencies or departments without field representation. This gap in the support to the UNDAF process, though not a major drawback to its work, does imply that individual countries cannot easily avail themselves of the expertise and professional services available within the United Nations system at large, including the United Nations Secretariat, with its depository of interregional experience and first-hand knowledge of the outcome of intergovernmental processes.

17. In order to ensure implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at the country level, it was necessary that they be partnered with other major initiatives, including the poverty reduction strategy paper process of the World Bank. The poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) are primarily a short- and a medium-term programming tool linked to financial targets and the budget, while the Millennium Development Goals are longer-term goals, linked to the strategic economic, social and environmental needs of countries. The difference, however, is not purely one of time horizon, but also of breadth of vision, required participation and institutional requirements. PRSPs are primarily focused on sound macroeconomic management and economic growth, while Millennium Development Goals, through targets and indicators, explicitly encompass a much greater universe of social and economic values. PRSPs are sometimes regarded as the tail end of the structural adjustment process of the 1980s and 1990s, when prudent macroeconomic management and fiscal balances took precedence over other considerations. Hence, the localization of the Millennium Development Goals and their partnering with PRSPs is a delicate process and one that requires the strengthening of public administration to respond to the task.

18. Increasingly, strengthening public administration necessitates empowering the service recipients or constituents of public services. It has been found that community and civil society participation, so vitally important to the PRSP process, is on occasion inadequate or flawed.[7] This is not surprising if the communities themselves, and the civil society organizations representing them, are not technically equipped to appraise the proposals contained in the PRSPs. Furthermore, if decentralization is a means of spreading good governance and accountability, the question arises as to whether civil society, and especially rural communities, are sufficiently informed and prepared to effectively participate. Accountability implies that civil society representatives should not only be consulted but also have the right to monitor the progress of initiatives and, most importantly, remain part and parcel of the final decision-making process.

19. Traditionally, partnerships and interaction between the public and private sectors in developing countries were essentially one-way relationships, involving learning from the private sector and the corporatization of the public sector, including attempts to introduce private corporate culture into public service. These approaches, referred to by some as "new public management", emphasized, inter alia, strategic planning, performance management, accountability, results, purchaser/provider split, contracting out and "doing more with less" initiatives. Consistent with private sector principles and practices, the public was identified as, "consumers with the ability to choose and complain although not the ability to proactively shape services". In many countries with developing economies, given the institutional weaknesses of the States (and that of the international funding and donor agencies), the managerial reforms and the private/public partnerships that were introduced produced less than optimum results. These weaknesses, which were

endemic to public institutions, seemed to have rendered the private/public partnerships in the production of public goods less tenable, especially from the equity perspective. Others claimed that the market-managerial approach to resource mobilization and economic development also seemed to have failed "to deliver on its central claim to lower costs per (constant) unit of service". These realizations have prompted a rethinking of public/private partnerships. It is now recognized that both the State and the private sector have their distinct and mutually respective spheres of interest and activities and that even in market economies the private sector alone cannot be relied on to deliver all developmental needs, especially the Millennium Development Goals, nor can it guarantee cost-effectiveness in the delivery of all services. In the sphere of public or social goods, including education, health, the physical environment, water and sanitation, the role of the public sector is indispensable. What is crucial is to find out the right role for the right partner and to find a strategic framework within which the partnership is a mutually reinforcing "joined-up-entity", dedicated to the common goals of growth, quality, cost-effectiveness and equity. An example of a vibrant and productive partnership between the private sector, government and communities is the Guangcai programme for poverty eradication in China, summarized in box 1 below.

Box 1

Guangcai programme for poverty eradication — China

The Guangcai programme, coordinated by the China Society for Promoting the Guangcai Programme (CSPGP), was initiated in 1994 by Chinese entrepreneurs to invest, for profit, in poverty stricken areas in China. There are various stakeholders involved, including the central and local government authorities, not-for-profit organizations, the private sector, farmers and other beneficiaries. Originally the programme expected to create 10 projects, develop 10 different sources of funds and train 100 micro-entrepreneurs annually. The achievements of the programme have far surpassed the original targets and expectations. By 2003, more than 10,000 projects had been created, resulting in approximately 4.5 million people being lifted out of poverty. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, though not a funding organization, supported these efforts in a modest way through co-organizing, with CSPGP, technical cooperation workshops, as well as by inviting CSPGP technical cooperation in activities implemented by the Department, thus providing CSPGP with exposure to international communities. Leadership and direction rested throughout with the national authorities.

The remarkable success of the Guangcai partnership is attributed to the following:

- The unique framework of partnership forged between investors and beneficiaries, with legally binding contracts on an equal basis to delineate each party's responsibilities, rights and obligations
- The CSPGP has developed a strong and effective nationwide organizational structure, which is supported by political authority, strong networks and a rational and clear decision-making process
- The strong and stable leadership of the CSPGP, headed by capable and motivated individuals who continue to provide effective leadership in strategic and programmatic aspects has been key to its success

Source: Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

20. In addition, there has been a resurgence of interest in corporate social responsibility, which goes hand in hand with ways of creating partnerships centred on mutually agreed goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals, and in ways of reducing strife, risk and transaction costs in countries with rich natural resources and in communities in danger of being disenfranchised.[8] There is clearly an element of enlightened self-interest in such partnerships, especially in the adoption of corporate social responsibility by the private sector, however it is in areas beyond minimizing risks or involving any perceived hostile attitude towards the corporate sector that such partnerships matter. Co-opting dissent alone cannot serve as the basis of partnerships, especially those between the private sector and civil society, unless they are based on mutuality of interests and are accountable. To encourage good corporate social responsibility, it is equally important for the public sector to put in place a regulatory framework for all — the private sector, communities and Government. It is not sufficient to arrive at public-private partnerships without subjecting them to the rules of accountability and public ethics. At the international level, the framework that brings together United Nations agencies, companies, labour and civil society in support of the nine principles encompassing human and labour rights and the environment is the United Nations Global Compact profiled in box 2 below.

Box 2

Partnerships through international voluntarism: the United Nations Global Compact

The Global Compact was announced by the Secretary-General at the World Economic Forum in 1999 and was launched at the Headquarters in July 2000. It brings companies together with United Nations organizations, international labour organizations and civil society bodies to foster partnerships and to build a more inclusive and equitable global marketplace. The Compact calls on companies to embrace nine principles from the areas of human rights, labour and the environment. The nine principles are:

Human rights

- Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights within their sphere of influence
- Make sure they are not complicit in human rights abuses

Labour standards

- Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining
- Elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour
- Effective abolition of child labour
- Eliminate discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

Environment

- Businesses should support a precautionary approach to all environmental matters
- Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility
- Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

The Global Compact was created to help organizations redefine their strategies and course of action so that all people, not just a fortunate few, can share the benefits of globalization. In his founding speech in Davos, Switzerland, the Secretary-General observed that if we cannot make globalization work for all, in the end it will work for no one. Since the Compact is a voluntary partnership, employers are encouraged to work in their own ways, and at their own speed, towards embracing, supporting and enhancing these principles in the workplace.

Source: see www.unglobalcompact.org.

B. The challenges

21. As recognized in the Millennium Declaration, the template for the main challenges for the developing countries and countries in transition are the Millennium Development Goals. Progress to date has been uneven. In South-East Asia, including China, and in South Asia, including India, countries are making significant progress, while countries in other regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, are experiencing slower progress. The two reports to date by the Secretary-General have made it clear that weak strategizing combined with inadequate repositioning of public institutions and institutional processes surrounding the Millennium Development Goals have contributed to slow progress in some parts of the developing world.[9] In driving and localizing the Millennium Development Goals and their accompanying processes, public administration may need to ensure the following:

- First, positioning of Millennium Development Goals with parallel and interconnected initiatives, such as the PRSPs, with the purpose of enabling the Millennium Development Goals to be part of overall development agenda of the country without unduly overloading the critical skills of the public sector
- Second, solving how to empower the public sector to be accountable and proactive towards partnerships with the private sector, both the for-profit and the not-for-profit private sector, and with civil society at large[10]
- Third, developing indicators and benchmarks that monitor and measure the value of partnerships for accountability and as case studies of good practice
- Fourth, developing an information base and analytical and programmatic tools in support of Millennium Development Goals at the country level as well as for comparison across regions. To date, considerable work has been done on costing the fiscal implications of Millennium Development Goals for developing countries, but regarding the development of approaches and policy instruments, citizen/government dialoguing for pro-poor budgets, social audits of performance and social impact assessment of expenditure, initiatives are still rare
- Fifth, the UNDAF process is emerging as a powerful programmatic and thematic tool for the United Nations. A periodic monitoring and assessment of the process, and how it fits into the Millennium Development Goal and partnering-for-development objectives of different countries seems warranted
- Sixth, a resource mobilization strategy that helps attracting and securing resources both from within as well as outside and availed in a manner that neither compromises the ultimate objective of all resource use — poverty reduction, nor should such partnerships weaken the aspects of equity and cost-effectiveness in delivery of services

22. Fundamentally, as the road map on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals makes clear, the challenges are twofold: first, States need to demonstrate the political will to carry out the commitments already made and must take the necessary steps to adjust institutions and the decision-making processes accordingly; and second, the capacity of the United Nations to provide space and support to the countries to initiate genuine dialogue and partnerships with developed

countries and with civil society must be renewed. The implications and recommendations flowing from these requirements are set out in the next section.[11]

III. The way forward

23. The value of partnerships in the work of the United Nations is not in dispute. It is enshrined in the Charter and is embraced and reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration. Partnerships of ideas and values have to be tested and informed by deeds and results. In the present century, as evinced by the Millennium Development Goals, the development challenge is not only about the mobilization of resources, however critical this factor is for poverty alleviation, but also about accountable partnerships for sustainable development.

24. Accountability is a core value not only for the immediate task of the Millennium Development Goals, but to regain the trust and support of an empowered civil society that is committed to shared goals and is aware of the responsibilities that drive these commitments. Even the mobilization of resources, the so-called "bottom line", presupposes partnerships and coalitions of partners coming together, as the International Conference on Financing for Development has demonstrated. Box 3 below shows two examples, one from Africa and the other from Asia, of the new kind of partnerships that the United Nations system, and in particular the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is actively encouraging.

Box 3

Support by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for developmental partnerships

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs supported the South Asia Centre for Policy Studies, a civil society partnership in South Asia, in drafting and implementing the South Asian Citizens' Social Charter. The Centre is a major civil society association that promotes regional cooperation among its members to link up Governments with citizens' perspectives on key policy matters. The support of the Department is expected to strengthen the dialoguing and partnering process between citizens and Governments and help introduce the concept of "engaged governance" as a regular methodology in development management.

In 2003, the Department secured financing from the United Nations Human Security Trust Fund, donated by Japan, to implement a project in the Gambia focusing on water resources and alternative energy supplies for poverty alleviation. The project, established initially for a three-year period, aims to partner selected rural communities and their organizations, including community-based organizations, with government agencies and United Nations-supported expertise in order to improve the water and energy supplies in poorer rural areas. A strength of the project is that it relies considerably on the social capital found in rural communities and combines both commercial and non-commercial activities whose content and combination will be based on community choice and responsibility.

Source: See A/58/52 and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

25. At the national level, accountable partnerships are equally critical not only between government and the international partners, where concerns of asymmetrical power surface from time to time, but also between government, the private sector and civil society. Such partnerships were more difficult to establish during the 1980s and 1990s, when the public sector was derided and its role in development was questioned, if not demonized, although even then there were excellent examples of government and civil society partnerships with impressive results. Critical to the success of such partnerships was the sharing of values and the mobilization of communities, often under conditions that were not the most propitious. The example of combating HIV/AIDS in Uganda, given in box 4 below, showcases the value of partnerships when political commitment and the mobilization of society, including community empowerment, NGO involvement and the support of the international community, can have a decisive impact.[12]

Box 4

Partnerships to fight HIV/AIDS: the case of Uganda

HIV/AIDS was first recognized in Uganda in 1982. By 1993, the country had the highest HIV prevalence rate in the world. Uganda, however, is one of a very few countries that have succeeded in reversing the epidemic. The HIV adult prevalence rate there is estimated to have dropped from over 30 per cent in 1992 to 14 per cent in 1995 to below 8 per cent in 2000. Currently, it is claimed to be 6 per cent and falling.

The Government response to HIV/AIDS epidemic dates back to 1986, when the AIDS Control Programme was created. Subsequently, in 1992, the AIDS Commission was established under the Office of the President. The HIV/AIDS initiatives are embedded in the country's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), which can draw upon debt relief savings obtained through the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

The Ugandan AIDS Commission has put a partnership and a leadership mobilization strategy in place, involving leaders at all levels. The Uganda Business Council on HIV/AIDS supports the promotion of a prevention and care programme at the workplace. In addition the Uganda Business Coalition and the Network of AIDS Service Organizations have been formed to build capacity and provide technical support and guidance. The United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the HIPC initiative, have provided support and partnering, but the decisive commitments, leadership and mobilization were all nationally led.

Source: UNDP, www.undp.org/hiv/uganda.pdf.

26. The lessons from these experiences is that partnerships should not be formed simply of convenience. Partnerships that enable government and the public sector to mobilize civil society and the private sector have a good chance of producing results and do not break under stress. In order for this to take place, accountability with

regard to the mutuality of interests, including progress and responsibilities that can be monitored and vetted, is indispensable. For example, what is significant about the case of fighting HIV/AIDS in Uganda is that the pandemic, although it affected individuals, was treated as a "reverse" public good. That is, it was realized sufficiently early that the issue of advocacy and prevention was a society-wide as well as a community responsibility and concern. The benefits had positive externalities that went beyond the scope of the individual's health care and material well-being.

27. Regional cooperation and intergovernmental partnerships are increasingly used as a way of localizing the Millennium Development Goals and Millennium Development Goal follow-up, as well as in support of the implementation of international resolutions and commitments, including those arising from the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit for Sustainable Development. To that end, in a relatively short period, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has made impressive strides in forging partnerships across the continent that promote good governance and socio-economic objectives. Other subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC) have achieved commendable progress on a number of fronts, including tariff harmonization, labour mobility and a cross-border investment code. The business sector and civil society are increasingly being integrated into these initiatives, in particular with regard to corporate responsibility and the rights of vulnerable groups, including women and victims of HIV/AIDS.

28. The interest of Governments and, by extension, public administration in partnerships is twofold: firstly, a direct interest, which helps in the pooling of collective resources (human, financial and technological); and second, in creating an enabling environment for informed decision-making. Traditionally, the role of the government as a partner was rather restricted, and usually confined to public services, including utilities, where the premise of the partnership with the private sector was primarily commercial. Hence, a good number of the partnerships forged during the market liberalization period, especially in Africa, between the public and private sectors were predicated on commercial considerations, basically to fill up resource gaps. Partnerships with civil society organizations were forged with caution, if not with suspicion. The value of social capital and its importance in the socio-economic development of a country was yet to be fully recognized. These two difficulties, namely, the limited orientation of the public sector to the robust scope of partnerships with the private sector, and the limited knowledge on the part of the private sector of the value of social capital as important input for development, acted as barriers to broad-based partnerships.

29. The Millennium Development Goals, and its accompanying process, and other major initiatives, such as the poverty reduction strategy papers of the World Bank, provide a platform for more value-based and equal partnerships where both incentives and rewards are commensurate to the international commitments made and in line with national priorities.

30. It is clear that both the environment or context within which partnerships can be forged and the opportunities for such initiatives, both among traditional partners and for new coalitions, are improving. At the macro level, the spread of democratic principles is a positive underbed that encourages communities and individuals with

shared values to come together to seek improvement in their material and social conditions. Moreover, the increased targeting of goals, such as with the Millennium Development Goals and the PRSPs, which are more issues-based and are holistic in nature, created an enabling environment for partnerships. This evolved context necessitates greater partnering, more collegial dialoguing and multi-criteria policy analysis and advice. The new partnership arrangements require a better informed and more skilled civil society, especially in economic issues. Furthermore, the element of accountability must be an integral part of the process to ensure that the mutual rights and responsibilities of the stakeholders are transparent, well understood and well protected.

31. Small communities, or NGOs active in a community, often do not understand what is at stake, let alone carry on a dialogue with Governments and the representatives of the international financial institutions over macroeconomic strategies and monetary policies that appear distant, yet have the potential to impact their lives in significant ways.[13] Furthermore, consulting communities is not tantamount to actual participation with them, unless such consultations lead to the mainstreaming of views given and a feedback on outcome is provided.[14] Finally, there is the issue of sustainability and the creation of long-term trust in partnerships. Ad hoc or opportunistic partnerships experience limited success, and are hardly sustainable. Moreover, although there are cases of good and productive partnerships, they have not been adequately studied; nor have indicators and the impact of good partnerships been assessed systematically. In both the Millennium Declaration and the meetings and papers of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, it is recognized that this situation needs to change in order to encourage the establishment of sustainable partnerships and the strengthening of their stakeholders in a more systematic way. Positive change can be facilitated by political commitment, by recognizing gaps and challenges and by developing a set of practical recommendations reflecting contemporary concerns and opportunities for public administration.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

32. **The Millennium Declaration has presented the immense challenges and opportunities for the establishment of accountable partnerships by national Governments and the international community. This present report stresses that, although the key challenges with regard to Millennium Development Goals have been clearly understood and articulated by the Member States, the issues that relate to opportunities, especially partnerships, have been less well appreciated.**

33. **At the follow-up meetings to the Millennium Declaration, including the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit for Sustainable Development, the vision of the Declaration has been embraced and the importance of forging new partnerships stressed. The partnerships forged between national Governments and international financial institutions in the previous two decades, the 1980s and 1990s, were often lopsided, with asymmetrical power relations, narrowly based and often unsustainable. The public sector in developing countries is still smarting from the experience and cautious of new initiatives in that direction. However, the**

template for action is now rather different, and it needs to be understood and acted upon.

34. Sustainable partnerships have clear and value-based objectives; they are inclusive, accountable, empower their stakeholders and have a measure of mutuality in their relations; their operating arrangements are transparent and equal.

35. In summary, partnership is regarded both as an output as well as an element of the Millennium Development Goals process. Experience indicates, however, that not all partnerships produce the desired results. In forging partnership, it is crucial to find out what works and what does not. Equally important are the issues of when to forge partnerships, for what purpose and how to make them durable and accountable. To that end, the following recommendations are made for the consideration of the Member States:

(a) Empower public administration through means such as institutional repositioning, capacity-building and skills upgrading to help position Millennium Development Goals in the national context, as part of the national development agenda, alongside major interconnected initiatives such as the poverty reduction strategy papers;

(b) Support Governments and the public sector to act proactively, with accountability, to establish partnerships with the private sector and civil society, and provide support to the latter to effectively engage public administration and the international financial institutions to carry on a collegial dialogue on shared objectives;

(c) Provide support to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process and ensure that its monitoring and assessment of progress is independent, transparent and inclusive. In this regard, ensure that the mandate, competencies and comparative advantage of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is made available and used by the United Nations resident coordinators in support of the UNDAF process and its monitoring and assessment aspects;

(d) Strengthen an enabling environment for partnerships through innovative means, such as a code of accountability, "engaged governance",[15] and provide the necessary skills for Governments and civil society to carry on a more fair, symmetrical and analytical-based dialogue with the other partners, both national and international, for the development, implementation and monitoring of pro-poor strategies and policies;

(e) Develop approaches, methodologies and tools for citizen-based performance monitoring and pro-poor budgeting;

(f) Develop a database on best practices and indicators in support of the needs of public administration and public institutions (including political institutions such as parliamentarians), with particular attention to the role of, and the space for, private/public/civil society in the creation of sustained economic growth underpinned by a pro-poor strategy.

36. In conclusion, it is important to stress that partnership is key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals also requires increased resource mobilization and

productive utilization of those resources. ODA is an important source of resources at the international level. Fair trade deals are another tool for the enhancement of resource availability at the country level.

37. **Efforts at resource mobilization at the international level are ongoing, but somewhat less successful. This report argues that there are real opportunities at the country level to expand resource bases from within, through improved and accountable partnerships, especially with NGOs and civil society organizations. The role of, and the space for, private/public partnerships needs to be examined more carefully, with the primary goals of cost-effectiveness and equity in service delivery. These initiatives in partnerships require that public administration builds its capacity to set the agenda of partnerships and to develop the skills and arrangements relevant to sustaining them.**

38. **The United Nations, and the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in particular, are aware of these needs. The present report is a contribution to the ongoing discussion on how to ensure that the opportunities of partnerships are recognized within the correct context and how national Governments, made up of both legislative as well as executive arms, can be sensitized to these opportunities and assisted in repositioning structures and introducing procedures to pursue these goals more coherently and sensitively.**

Notes

[1] See, in particular, resolution 50/225, para. 7, "... strengthening of partnership of the public sector with the private sector and civil society, as well as providing an enabling environment for private sector activities, as appropriate, ... which supports all phases of the development process as well as the promotion of opportunities for all to participate in all spheres of the public sector".

[2] There are several references in the triennial policy review of the operational activities for the development of the United Nations system, resolution 56/201 to the greater need for partnerships for development both within the United Nations system and with new partners (see, in particular, para. 76). An interesting aspect of the triennial policy review is that it clearly singles out partnerships, as distinct from coordination, as a vehicle for development support. Hence, while the better coordination of activities was the traditional conceived mode, increasingly partnerships between the United Nations system and other development entities are also coming to the fore.

[3] The paper, Mainstreaming poverty reduction strategies within the Millennium Development Goals: the role of public administration (E/C.16/2003/5) concluded "Many of these challenges though immense are not insurmountable. Weak institutional structures and inadequate capacities of the key stakeholders are the fundamental base where these challenges reside ... Weak institutions make poor partners, have inadequate links with their constituents, and are unable to make effective use of advice sought". Although the paper dealt with primarily with poverty reduction, its applicability was wider, encompassing all Millennium Development Goals and the need for partnerships in public administration.

[4] See A/58/323, para. 69 and annex, para. 33.

[5] The Millennium Project team were part co-authors of the UNDP *Human Development Report 2003*, on the theme "Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end poverty". Both the *Human Development Report 2003*, and the Economic and Social Council report (E/C.16/2003/5), presented by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration during its second meeting in April 2003, provide a detailed description of the background and workings of the various United Nations system agencies partnering the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals.

[6] For example, as the report on follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/57/319) makes clear, the Monterrey conference was unique in bringing both the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system closer together, as well as in forging new partnerships with a number of organizations, including the European Union and national Governments committed to increasing their official development assistance (ODA) contributions.

[7] For a candid and critical review of participation in PRSP process, see "Participation in poverty reduction strategy papers", a retrospective study, World Bank, January 2002. This review by Bank staff, includes a summary of external assessment of participation in PRSPs carried out by a number of non-Bank institutions, including civil society organizations.

[8] At the international level a pioneering initiative to this end is the United Nations Global Compact announced by the Secretary-General at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January 1999, and launched at the United Nations in July 2000. The Global Compact is not a regulatory instrument, but a network and partnership among companies, labour and civil society, based on nine principles that encompass human rights, labour and the environment. To date, over a thousand entities, worldwide, have joined the Compact. The Compact has a very active web site and Internet portal, including documentation, initiatives and partnerships formed, which can be accessed at www.unglobalcompact.org.

[9] The two annual reports to date by the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration are A/57/270 and A/58/323.

[10] Professor Mohammed Yunus, of the Grameen Bank, makes a distinction between what he calls, "social private sector" (such as the microcredit institutions that operate as part of the private sector but contribute to social objectives only) and the "profit private sector" that operates for profit, but contributes to economic growth as well. The civil society organizations are interest groups that promote social issues on behalf of the citizens.

[11] See A/56/326.

[12] In his paper, "Innovations in governance and public administration for poverty reduction in post-conflict countries in a globalized world" (with emphasis on the experience of Rwanda), Musoni Protais described how a long-term strategic partnership forged between a donor agency (United Kingdom), the Government, civil society organizations and the private sector is helping Rwanda to move out of its conflict situation and gradually move forward to implementing long-term development activities.

[13] Many civil society institutions recognize this weakness and are taking initiatives to overcome these difficulties. Recently, at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Government of Sri Lanka interregional workshop on engaged governance: South/South cooperation for pro-poor policies (Colombo, 9-11 December 2003), the South African delegate from the National Labour and Economic Development Institute explained how his Institute had introduced the "People budget" concept and how they had developed a simple manual for ordinary people to help them understand and analyse the budget and give feedback to the Government.

[14] See "Participation in poverty reduction strategy papers", World Bank, January 2002, especially report one, which deals with the external assessments of participation in poverty reduction strategy papers.

[15] DESA is spearheading the new concept of "engaged governance" as tool of good governance (engaged governance goes beyond partnership), important for pursuing pro-poor policies and strategies. Conceptually, engaged governance is defined as an approach that enables the expression and coordination of political, administrative and civic interests for the achievement of policy coherence, social justice and sustainable human development. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Government of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Evaluation Association, conducted the interregional workshop on engaged governance: South/South cooperation for pro-poor policies, in Colombo on 9-11 December 2003. The workshop discussed the conceptual as well as the operational aspects of engaged governance and highlighted several case examples. A publication highlighting the outcome of the workshop will soon be produced.